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## CLODION.

OF all the "Little Masters" of the eighteenth century, Clodion was, perhaps, the least celebrated in his day, and his present renown he owes to collectors, with whom rarity is a virtue, and to the brothers De Goncourt, who differed from other collectors only in having the knack to popularize their peculiar tastes and fancies by means of the press. Clodion's true name was Claude Michel, and he was born at Nancy, in Lorraine, on the 20th December, 1738. The nickname seems to be a misprint for "Claudion," under which name he exhibited his works in the Salon.

There is some likelihood that, from the first, Clodion was trained to art. His father, at one time, appears to have been a dealer in provisions; but, later, is styled sculptor to the King of Prussia. Several members of his mother's family were also sculptors. He is

known to have spent nine years at Rome as "pensionnaire," and some groups made by him there, after the antique, figured at the sale of Boucher's effects in 1774. The celebrated amateur, Julienne, also had some pieces of his in terra cotta. Lebrun and Mariette were among those of his contemporaries who appreciated him. Mariette's catalogue says: "There reigns in the works of this young artist an unusual correctness of design and a touch full of spirit and of fire."

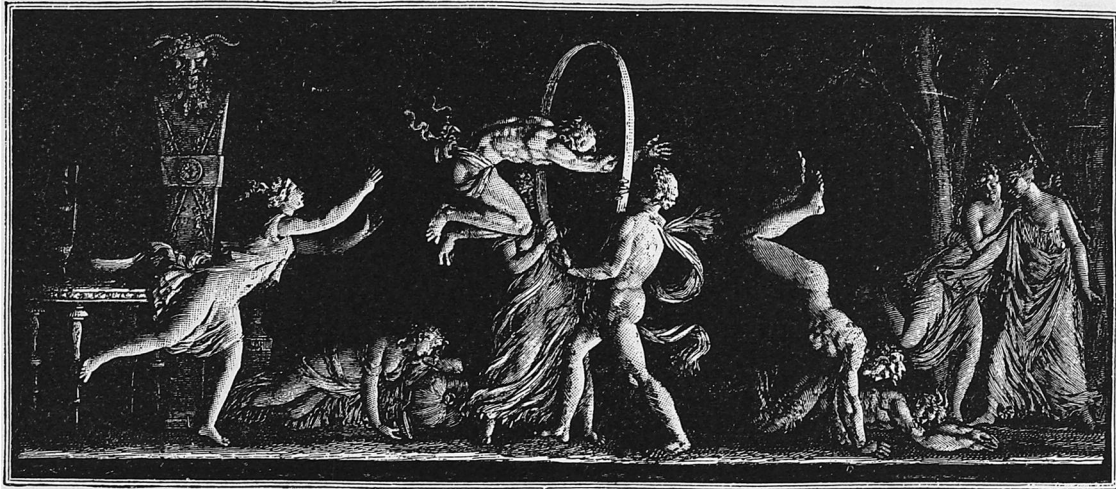
Mariette was a student of classic art, and so was Clodion in his way. But the latter did not trouble himself much about the masterpieces, real or supposed, of the antique schools, as they were known in his time. He gave all his attention and his study to the fragments of terra cotta reliefs and other secondary works of the ancients.

But he wrought variations upon the old themes with the same facility and originality that Petit Bernard, in his woodcuts, showed before him in copying the great Italian artists of his time. A closer comparison, however, might be made between him and the painter Prudhon, for, like the latter, Clodion, in his best days, was all grace and suavity, without any of the affected mannerism of

Bernard Salomon, another of the group of "little masters."

Still, toward the end of his life, he fell under the influence of the Davidian school and into a worse manner than that. His "Group of the Deluge," his "Hercules in Repose," his "Entrance of the French into Munich," show nothing of his old-time spirit and charm. His best work belongs, in every way, to the last century, and although he lived and continued to work and to show more than sufficient elasticity of thought and of temper well into the first quarter of the nineteenth (he

died in 1814), it is as an artist of the eighteenth century that he will in the future be best known and appreciated. His small bas-reliefs of nymphs and satyrs and children, executed, many of them, in terra cotta, hold his finest inspirations. He was above all things a charming decorator, and he was more himself when ornamenting a vase or a clock than when executing the more ambitious works to which the prejudices of the Davidians would confine all artists. He even decorated an entire house at Nancy with bas-reliefs, the motives of which



BAS-RELIEF IN WAX, BY CLODION. FORMERLY IN THE SAN DONATO COLLECTION.

were drawn from the trade of the owner, who was a manufacturer of tools and machinery.

The two periods of Clodion's activity as an artist are divided by a space of eighteen years, at the time when the taste of the public was undergoing the most marked transformation. He had exhibited in 1772, 1779 and 1783; he did not exhibit again until 1801. Meanwhile, the little figures and reliefs of his first were falling into disesteem. At the Julienne sale, in 1767, 250 livres were paid for two small figures by him; at the Boucher sale, in 1771, his "Vestal" brought 200 livres; at the Mariette sale, in 1775, a vase with children in relief went to 600; and at the Varachan sale, in 1777, a group of nymphs and bacchantes brought 900 livres. But in 1783 a vase, with reliefs of children, brought only 72



BAS-RELIEF IN WAX, BY CLODION. FORMERLY IN THE SAN DONATO COLLECTION.

francs; a group of satyrs, with birds, 46 francs, and a faun dancing with a corybante, 31 francs.

De Goncourt, who, more than any one else, has helped to restore Clodion's reputation and set it on its true basis, sums up his qualities as a sculptor for luxurious but not vast interiors: "No one has known, like him, how to retain the charm of a sketch, of a first thought, in the finished work, which has nothing of the heaviness of the material in which it is wrought, but, on the contrary, is all inspiration and esprit."

## MINIATURES.

## I.

"A PORTRAIT of real authenticity," says Walpole, "calls up so many collateral ideas as to fill an intelligent mind more than any other species of painting." It is to this and to their small size and portability that miniatures owe most of the esteem in which they are held by collectors. We do not forget the advantages which they offer in the matter of framing, the possibility of surrounding

them with brilliants or with pearls, or of setting them in snuffboxes or bonbonnières in borders of exquisitely chased gold or enamel work. But we do not hesitate to say that there is no collector who would not prefer a good miniature of an interesting personage without frame to the most beautifully wrought frame without its miniature. Walpole's dictum must, therefore, be held as good; and the implication

that miniature collecting is something higher than a mere mania and bordering on a serious avocation, must also be admitted. It is not of recent introduction in the United States, and collections of miniatures have long been known in England; yet, until the publication by Macmillan & Co., of Propert's "History of Miniature Art," there has been nothing like an adequate treatise on the subject in English, and we doubt whether anything so complete has been written in any other tongue. Though of the highest interest to art lovers, miniatures have, in fact, been neglected by writers on art, so that there is probably no subject on which the average collector feels himself so much in need of guidance, and especially at this time, when the final effort must be made to sift the genuine from the false and to preserve to posterity the true effigies of the men and women of the last century who were sitters to Petitot and Cosway and Fragonard and Isabey.

These great men in a small way were not the first of their kind. They were preceded, it is almost needless to say, by the illuminators of missals and other books, in the Middle Ages; and indeed Mr. Propert traces the genealogy of the miniaturist

back through the Byzantine and Classical schools to the engravers on bone of the Glacial period. But, for our purpose, it will suffice to regard the development of the art in the eighteenth century and its almost complete extinction in the present.

The fathers of the English school of miniatures, in the modern sense of the term, we may say in passing, were Hans Holbein, Hilliard, Isaac and Peter Olliver, and Samuel Cooper. Their works, portraits of Elizabeth, James I. and the lords and ladies of their reigns, are, of

course, out of the reach of amateurs of the present, especially of those residing in the United States, to whom more modern portraits are, in fact, more interesting. Works of their immediate successors, Vandyck, David Loggan and Lewis Crosse, are hardly more easily obtainable. But the Roundheads pictured by Cooper are somewhat more familiar to us, and the beauties whom Cosway drew when George III. was king.

"Place aux dames"—let us begin with the latter. Cosway drew Lady Melbourne, her elbow resting on a wall; and Mrs. Moffat, making eyes at the spectator; and Mrs. Sheridan, gazing into infinity; and Mrs. Moffat in a turban; and George IV., as a rather good-looking, curly-headed infant. He picked up the first of his training as a servant boy in a drawing-school in London. He afterward became himself a drawing teacher, and finally one of the most noted fops in town, having filled his house on Pall Mall with inlaid furniture, Persian carpets and old armor, just as if he were a New Yorker of to-day. His treatment is as remarkable for breadth as for finish and refinement. Unfortunately, forgeries of his works abound. "Every possessor of a tenth-rate miniature," says Mr. Propert, "has only one name on his lips—Cosway." But his work is easy to recognize. As in Cooper's portraits the treatment of the hair furnishes the best test. It is massed in light and shade, without laborious line work. In sketching with a pencil, it is true, he employed lines to indicate the flow of the hair, but very freely. His portraits are never signed on the front; but occasionally on the back of the ivory one reads the Latin inscription: "Ric<sup>dm</sup> Cosway, R. A., Primarius Pictor Serenissimi Walliæ Principis pinxit."

Contemporaries of Cosway were William Wood, who painted very much in his manner, and whose work is often attributed to Cosway; Andrew Plimer, whose best miniatures are in no way inferior to Cosway's; John Smart, Horace Hone, and James Nixon, men of less talent, and Henry Bone, who, possibly as gifted, wasted himself on too many arts, being an enameller of watches and a painter on china, as well as a miniaturist.

Henry Bone is best known as a copyist in little of Titian, Raphael, Murillo and Reynolds. He experimented with enamel colors, and was one of the first in England to use them successfully in miniature painting. He frequently obtained large prices for specimens of this kind of work, 2200 guineas having been paid for his "Bacchus and Ariadne." He was pensioned by the Royal Academy in his old age, and died in 1834, in his seventy-eighth year. The works of his son, Henry Pierce Bone, who was also an R. A., are frequently sold for his, though much inferior.

Another graceful miniaturist of the time was Henry Edridge. His heads are always carefully finished; the body and hands but slightly indicated. He died in 1821. Luke Sullivan, the engraver of "The March to Finchley," and assistant of Hogarth in other works, was a miniaturist of great repute in his day. He was particularly successful with female heads. Charles Sheriff was Mrs. Siddons's favorite miniature painter; and Anne Foldstone was George the Fourth's. There were many amateur female miniaturists at the time, of whom may be mentioned Lady Lucan, copyist of the Olivers, Cooper and others, and praised by Walpole; Lady Spencer, pupil of Reynolds, some of whose works have been engraved by Bartolozzi, and Lady Diana Beauclerc, who designed plaques for Wedgwood.

Coming down to the nineteenth century, we find that only its opening years need detain us long. The best period of miniature art in England is almost exactly covered by the reign of George III., 1760 to 1820. A Scotchman, Andrew Robertson, is the first to claim notice. He was a pupil of Benjamin West, whose portrait he painted. His work is well finished, correct, somewhat crude in color. James Holmes painted Lord Byron and George IV. Alfred Chalon, born in Geneva, of French parents, was one of the most dashing original of miniaturists. He painted Queen Victoria and most of the celebrities of fifty years ago, and died in 1860. In the same year died Sir William Ross, pupil of Robertson, and with them may be said to have died the art of miniature painting. Photography came in some time before that, and Ross was one of the first to announce that "it was all up with miniature painting."

Of collections of English miniatures, that at Windsor Castle is the finest. It contains three portraits of Henry VIII., attributed to Holbein, and several other portraits by him. Oliver's portrait of Sir Philip Sidney is there, and Cooper's of General Monck and of Monmouth.

The Buccleuch collection contains several heads as-

cribed to Holbein, many Hilliards, and some fine examples of Hoskins, among them Sir John Suckling and Algernon Sidney. Cooper's portraits of Miss Stuart (whose charms are detailed in Grammont's memoirs), of Lady Dudley, Lady Fairfax, Nell Gwynne, Lady Falconberg, daughter of Oliver Cromwell, and of Cromwell himself, belong to this collection. There are many enamels, one of Horace Walpole, signed by Prewett.

Mr. J. Hayward Hawkins has a portrait by Holbein of the wife of Sir Thomas More; portraits of Lord Arundel and Lady Devereux by Hilliard, and of the Earl of Strafford and Lord Herbert of Cherburg by Hoskins. Cooper is represented by a head of the poet Andrew Marvel; and there are many other miniatures, both French and English.

The best collection of Oliver's works belongs to Mr. Wingfield Digby. Baroness Burdett Coutts has a great part of Walpole's collection. Mr. Edward Joseph has the finest Plimer known, an oblong medallion of the three daughters of Lord Northwick. Mr. Joseph's superb collection of miniatures by Cosway and his English contemporaries was fully described and illustrated in *The Art Amateur* on the occasion of its appearance in New York at the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund loan exhibition at the Academy of Design. Lord Tweedmouth has Cosway's sketch-book. And Mr. Propert himself is not the least of English collectors of the present day.

Of other national schools of miniature painting, the French is the most interesting to the collector. Most go as far back as 1475, when Jehan Clouet was court painter to Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Let us briefly dismiss the whole Clouet family, authentic drawings by members of which, in crayon or water-colors, on paper, cheap and almost common in their day, are unobtainable by the average collector at any price.

Of Petitot—who is chiefly to be considered as a painter on enamel—we shall speak later. Of other artists in miniature of Louis the Fourteenth's time, we may mention Mlle. de la Boissière, who painted that monarch and Louis XV. Frédéric Bruckmann made many miniatures of the King, enamelled in bas-relief. Elizabeth Sophie Cheron received a pension from him in recognition of her talent. Jean Baptiste Masson was the favorite of Louis XV. One of his portraits, mounted with forty-two brilliants and fifteen rose diamonds, cost 129,852 francs. Oudry, Penel, Jean Prevost and Raphael Bachi were also fashionable at the court of Louis XV. Boucher occasionally painted miniatures. One by him, representing Madame de Pompadour, was shown by Mr. Edward Joseph at the Bartholdi Pedestal Fund Loan Exhibition. Fragonard's work in miniature is rarely seen outside of a few famous European cabinets.

Louis Van Blarenbergh, born at Lille in 1719, is in some respects the most celebrated of miniaturists. His specialties were scenes of village life, and landscapes. His little paintings frequently sell for as much as 20,000 or 30,000 francs. His son, Henri Joseph, who died in 1825, is held to be almost his equal. The two often worked together, and the son seldom signed his full name, so that there is really little chance to distinguish his work from his father's. The Drouais were also father and son. It is curious to note, by the way, that among miniaturists there are frequently two of the same family—generally father and son, who are often of equal distinction. Sometimes, as in the case of Cosway, it is husband and wife.

The portraits of Pierre Adolphe Hall are remarkable for their breadth of treatment. One by this master, in the Moses Lazarus collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, reminds one of the technique of Meissonier. At the Levy-Cremieu sale at the Hotel Drouot, in Paris, about two years ago, miniatures by Fragonard, Blarenbergh, and Hall brought respectively 3000, 10,600, and 5000 francs, which gives a fair idea, perhaps, of the market value of portraits by such artists, and shows the absurdity of certain New York and Boston dealers labelling wretched little copies with the names of these masters, and offering them, at two or three hundred dollars apiece, as the work of these masters. Genuine miniatures by painters of such reputation always command high prices in London and Paris, where the demand for them is very great, and, of course, it is folly to suppose that American dealers, who are well aware of this fact, will sacrifice their treasures for the benefit of our New World collectors. Jean Baptiste Isabey is perhaps the best known of all the French miniaturists. He painted Napoleon's generals, invented their coats-of-arms, and arranged the fêtes at the Tuileries. He died under Napoleon III., at eighty-eight. His portraits of the period of the Directory are most sought for.

Of German miniaturists it is hardly worth while to mention more than one, Henri Frederic Füger, who died at Vienna in 1818. He is said to have been a very good colorist and correct draughtsman. Rose Alba Carriera, commonly called Rosalba, occupies the same pre-eminent place among the Italians. She became a French court painter, and was elected member of the French Academy about 1720.

Our author has nothing to say about miniatures in this country. It is true that the attractive Moses Lazarus collection had not been made when Mr. Propert's book was written. But Mr. Valentine Blacque and Mr. Morisini have, for some years, been forming their cabinets. Mr. Propert might also have heard of excellent miniatures in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore—precious family possessions—not a few of them by American miniaturists worthy to rank among the best of their English contemporaries of the last century. Did not Newport produce that master of the beautiful art, Malbone? Was not the famous telescope maker, the late Alvan Clark, whose lenses are the largest as well as the best the world has yet known, a miniature-painter in Boston? He was of the generation succeeding that of Malbone, and he dropped miniature-painting and took up lens-polishing, fearing that the daguerrotype had doomed portrait-painting by hand. Notwithstanding the debt the world owes Alvan Clark for his great telescopes, it suffered a severe loss when he ceased to paint miniatures, as one may see in that most fascinating of glass-cases, which revolves, at the Boston Art Museum, bearing the precious loans of old miniatures from New England families and from the collections of connoisseurs. Some of our artists who paint portraits in the current Paris fashion, giving their subjects in their every-day black clothing, with "coal-hole" background, affect a virtuous indignation or contempt for the art which made use of so many prettifying details and accessories as are common in these old miniatures—the ribbons and lace, the necklaces and jewels, the broad-brimmed hats, sometimes with fringes even eking out the broad brims, and long curls under these, and elaborately knotted kerchiefs and sleeve-puffs in their turn under these. Who could not make pretty pictures, they growl, with all that play in bric-a-brac and under orders to make the lady beautiful, whether or no, and the gentleman in scarlet robes or sky-blue coat, with buff facings and white peruke, "dignified and stately," whether or no? But, stay; the beauty of the real old masterpieces in miniatures did not lie altogether, or principally, in the artificial accessories, but rather in the life-likeness, the naturalness, the reproduction of character, and, above all, in that which the contemporary Paris artist most often misses—the repose and dignity of gentlemen and ladies. As for the matter of likeness, here is a true story of the portrait of a Mrs. Amory, at eighteen, which is considered one of Malbone's finest works: When it was exhibiting in a loan collection at Providence in 1853, it was seen by an English artist who was just then the vogue at Newport. One evening at a party he expressed a wish for an introduction to an old lady in the company, and on being presented asked her if she possessed a miniature by Malbone. "Yes," she replied, "one of myself, painted fifty years ago." "I have seen it," said the artist, "and I recognized the likeness the moment I saw you!" When Malbone was in London, West, writing to President Monroe, said: "I have seen a picture painted by a young man by the name of Malbone, which no painter in England can excel."

George Champlin Mason, who quotes this in his delightful chronicles of Newport, has made a study of Malbone's miniatures treasured there in old families, and states, in a generalization of his characteristics, that he had the good taste to ignore dress, and when he came to the hair no corkscrew curls or cushioned pile found favor with him; every knot was cut, save, perhaps, a gauzy band, a ribbon half hid in wavy folds, or a string of pearls entwined with tresses that were tossed back and left to play over brow and neck and shoulders in the most graceful and becoming manner. "Natural and beautiful the treatment was thought to be then," says Mr. Mason, "and to-day it is as natural and beautiful as it is possible for anything to be." There are a number of other New England miniature-painters, of one hundred years ago and later, whose work is highly prized by lovers of art; and if there be any general tendency now to return to this delicate and pleasing form of portrait-painting do let us encourage it, no matter how much our bulldozing impasto young fellows (who may be less in love with their own style before they die) may sniff at it.